(c) whether these proposals are being considered by Government; and

(d) if so, by when these proposals will be decided or cleared?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The development and promotion of tourism are primarily the responsibility of the State Government. However, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends Central Finance Assistance under its various Plan Schemes, to the proposals received from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, which are complete in all respects as per the scheme guidelines subject to *inter - se priority* and availability of funds.

No proposal from the Government of Himachal Pradesh is pending with Ministry of Tourism for clearance.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

Tourism and travel industry

824. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether domestic and affordable tourists are becoming the new mantras for tourism and travel industry;

(b) whether according to experts international tourism is expected to decline due to global slow down but simultaneously domestic Indian tourism is expected to grow at a pace of about 20 per cent per year;

(c) whether the industry by taking such action will be able to ten fold growth in domestic tours by year 2013-14;

(d) if so, what are measures travel industry have taken to increase incoming tourists; and

(e) whether Government has given all help and facilities to the travellers in achieving the same?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The number of domestic tourist visits in the country has increased from 269.6 million in 2002 to 526.6 million in 2007, with a compound growth rate of 14.3%, whereas the increase in figures of Foreign Tourist Arrivals for 2002 and 2007 are 2.38 million and 5.08 million. The figures for domestic tourist arrivals for 2008 are hot available.

In the year 2008, total international tourist arrivals in the world are estimated to have grown by only 2%, down from 7% in 2007.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Tourism has announced various promotional schemes like Visit India Year 2009, liberalization of Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) scheme for overseas marketing, introduction of MDA scheme for the promotion of domestic tourism and Meetings Incentives Conferences Exhibitions (MICE) tourism and allowing External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) for the construction of hotels and increase of Floor Area Ratio from 150 to 225 in most parts of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, so as to increase the tourist inflow in the country.